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Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system (A/70/660). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarifications, concluding with written responses received on 15 February 2016.

2. In its resolution 68/247 B, the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, not later than at its seventieth session, a progress report on the implementation of the organizational resilience management system, including information on the steps taken to expand the system to include offices away from Headquarters, regional commissions, field missions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs and the participating specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to complete the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the after-action review of storm Sandy, to finalize the global information technology disaster recovery plan and assessment and to comprehensively address the weaknesses identified in the area of business continuity during the storm and to report thereon in the context of the next progress report. The report of the Secretary-General was submitted in response to the resolution. In section III of his report, the Secretary-General describes the progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system; in section IV, progress in the implementation of the recommendations from the after-action review of storm Sandy is detailed.

3. With respect to the finalization of the global information technology disaster recovery plan and assessment, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry

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that the related details were included in the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the information and communications technology strategy for the United Nations (A/70/364 and Corr.1). The Committee's comments and recommendations on that matter were provided in a separate report (see A/70/7/Add.18, para. 25). In that regard, the Committee recalls its recommendation, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/248, that a detailed update on the status of the migration of the 171 critical information technology systems to enterprise data centres, as well as on the requirements for providing disaster recovery capabilities for the remaining systems, be provided in the next report of the Secretary-General. The Committee has provided further observations and recommendations in that regard in its report on the report of the Board of Auditors on progress in the handling of information and communications technology affairs in the Secretariat (A/70/755).

II. Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system

4. In his report, the Secretary-General sets out the principles of the organizational resilience management system (see A/70/660, para. 10) and describes the progress made in applying those principles in the United Nations system-wide emergency management framework. The report includes the status of implementation of the system, the scope of which encompasses United Nations Headquarters in New York, offices away from Headquarters, the regional commissions and peacekeeping operations and special political missions, as well as 16 funds and programmes and specialized agencies[1] (ibid., paras. 19-69).

5. According to the Secretary-General, the endorsement of an organizational resilience management system policy for the United Nations common system by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in October 2014 was a major step forward. An interdepartmental and inter-agency working group comprising representatives of Secretariat departments, offices away from Headquarters, regional commissions and agencies, funds and programmes has since been formed. The working group is chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services, who has delegated that responsibility to the Chief of the Business Continuity Management Unit (ibid., paras. 13 and 14).

6. The Secretary-General also indicates in his report that the working group has developed an implementation strategy, which includes key performance indicators to measure the success of the implementation of the system in the following areas: policy; governance; maintenance, exercise and review; risk management; and planning (ibid., paras. 15 and 16).

[1] The World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the World Health Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

7. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the key performance indicators included detailed actions to measure progress made in the implementation of the system and that the indicators were being used by all participating United Nations organizations. A matrix setting out and describing the indicators, provided to the Committee, is contained in the annex to the present report. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the development of the key performance indicators as a tool for measuring the progress made in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system.**

Status of implementation

8. The Secretary-General indicates that at United Nations Headquarters, the first comprehensive approach to emergency preparedness began in 2010 with the promulgation of the organizational resilience policy. Subsequently, the coordination, harmonization and integration of key components have become the regular way of doing business in preparing the Secretariat for an emergency. For other entities and duty stations, the system represents a new approach. The Secretary-General indicates that they therefore need additional efforts to put the system in place (ibid., para. 79).

9. The Secretary-General provides an account of the progress made in the implementation of each of the five above-mentioned areas of the system at United Nations Headquarters, which includes the reinforcement of key governance structures, learning opportunities for staff, the conduct of a simulation "tabletop" exercise and an after-action review, and the completion of a comprehensive risk assessment, including risks in the areas of security, medical and information technology disaster recovery, as well as risks to business continuity. In respect of planning, the Secretary-General indicates that all plans related to the emergency management framework were developed and a streamlined version in the form of the system "playbook" was published in late 2015 (ibid., para. 20).

10. In respect of risk management, the Advisory Committee notes that, in his fifth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat, the Secretary-General provides further details concerning the implementation of an effective enterprise risk management framework (see A/70/668, paras. 22-41). **The Advisory Committee recognizes the efforts made by the Secretary-General in assessing and managing risks as an essential part of an emergency management framework to ensure preparedness, prevention, response and recovery in case of disruption in the regular functioning of the Organization. The Committee trusts that such efforts will continue to be coordinated and integrated with the overall risk management framework of the Organization.**

11. The progress made at offices away from Headquarters, regional commissions and peacekeeping operations and special political missions is described in paragraphs 22 to 32 of the Secretary-General's report (A/70/660). According to the Secretary-General, the organizational resilience management system policy, endorsed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, has been adopted by all offices away from Headquarters and a majority of the regional commissions. In respect of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, the Secretary-General indicates that the amount of progress made varies. Where required, support from Headquarters is made available to the missions.

12. In paragraphs 34 to 69 of his report, the Secretary-General also provides an account of the progress made in implementing the principles of the system policy as

reported by a total of 16 funds and programmes and specialized agencies. Those organizations and entities reported on their efforts in strengthening their emergency management frameworks and structures, which in most cases include business continuity plans, crisis management and security.

13. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the progress made in applying the principles of the organizational resilience management system across the United Nations system, taking into account the systemic approach taken in the coordination, harmonization and integration of different components that contribute to the system-wide emergency management framework.**

Next steps

14. In paragraph 74 of his report, the Secretary-General proposes the next steps in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system, which include enhanced coordination among the key players through, inter alia, the use of the inter-agency global working group as a community of practice. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that intensified efforts made in 2015 had helped to ensure a holistic approach to emergency management among the participating entities. In that respect, the Committee was also informed that a Geneva-based inter-agency working group had developed a template for crisis management that comprised adaptable crisis response checklists and procedures and that could be completed in a joint effort by a United Nations country team. **The Advisory Committee emphasizes the ongoing need for adequate coordination and planning and ensuring the involvement of the host country in respect of emergency management at the country level, and trusts that efforts will continue to be made in that regard. The Committee looks forward to receiving updates in that respect in the next progress report of the Secretary-General.**

Costs of the organizational resilience management system

15. The total cost of the time spent by staff on the organizational resilience management system is estimated at $390,000 for all participating entities (ibid., para. 78). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the system was based on the synergies realized from the coordination by various specialists of their emergency management efforts. The Committee was also informed that, whereas the costs of individual specialists, such as security advisers, communications experts, facilities managers and business continuity personnel, were charged to their respective offices or units, the staff costs associated with coordinating the components of the organizational resilience management system were charged directly to the system. The estimated cost of the time spent by the staff participating in such coordination activities was based on the standard salary costs at their duty stations. A table showing a list of staff resources, in terms of number of days per annum, dedicated to coordinating the components of the organizational resilience management system is provided under paragraph 79 of the Secretary-General's report.

16. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/247 B, requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide a detailed accounting of the cost of the organizational resilience management system initiative in the context of future progress reports. The Committee also recalls that, at the time of its consideration of previous reports of the Secretary-General on this subject, it

considered it important that the actual cost of the initiative be identified and documented. In addition, the Committee emphasized the importance of tracking the resources dedicated for that purpose in various departments and offices and of providing the Assembly with a consolidated view of the actual overall costs of the initiative, as well as the costs related to emergency management and emergency preparedness activities (see A/67/608, para. 23, and A/68/780, paras. 17-19 and 46). **The Advisory Committee considers that the full range of activities that support organizational resilience has not been identified in the Secretary-General's report and remains important for determining the underlying costs. The implementation of the enterprise resource planning system in United Nations entities should facilitate the identification of such costs. The Committee looks forward to receiving updated information in that regard in the next progress report of the Secretary-General.**

III. Progress in the implementation of the recommendations from the after-action review of storm Sandy

17. An update on the status of the recommendations emanating from the after-action review of storm Sandy and on the consideration by the Secretary-General of all means of risk mitigation is set out in paragraphs 70 to 73 of the Secretary-General's report. According to the Secretary-General, all 25 recommendations resulting from the after-action review — aimed at minimizing the vulnerability of United Nations Headquarters to extensive flooding and mitigating the impact of such flooding if it did occur — have now been completed. The report of the Secretary-General also indicates the availability of best possible solutions for the protection of the United Nations compound and its infrastructure, as well as strong means to ensure the continuity of critical business services.

18. On a related matter, regarding the availability of the United Nations website in the event of a disruption in normal business activities at Headquarters in New York, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the resilience of the website and the ability to recover its main elements, including the home page, had been improved. To further strengthen the resilience of the website, the Office of Information and Communications Technology continues to explore cloud-based hosting options, taking into consideration functionality, cost and information security requirements, as well as operational resilience, taking into account the enterprise data centres in Valencia, Spain, and Brindisi, Italy. **The Advisory Committee trusts that in emergency situations the availability of the United Nations website will be ensured through sound technical support and effective management.**

19. The Secretary-General indicates in his report that the Secretariat was able to renew its global property insurance policy at the highest level of coverage at a more competitive premium, which became feasible as a result of the extensive renovations at Headquarters and a robust global marketing exercise. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the current policy had worldwide coverage for property risks, including flood coverage at Headquarters, and that it was significantly better than the previous insurance coverage. The Committee recalls its recommendation that the insurance market be closely monitored with a view to securing adequate coverage at a reasonable cost for all United Nations installations (see A/68/780, para. 48). **The Advisory Committee welcomes the**

improved insurance coverage secured by the present global property insurance policy for the United Nations, and stresses the need for continued monitoring of the insurance market in that regard. The Committee expects that the Secretary-General will ensure that all United Nations assets and installations have adequate insurance coverage at all times.

IV. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

20. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General on progress in applying the principles of the organizational resilience management system in the United Nations system-wide emergency management framework, taking into account its comments and recommendations in the present report.**

Annex

Key performance indicators: organizational resilience management system

No.	*Component*	*Indicator*	*Measurement*
A.1	Policy	Availability of policy document(s) on organizational resilience management system	Yes/no
A.2		Active promulgation of the organizational resilience management system policy	Yes/no
A.3		Policy document(s) integrate the various planning instruments	Yes/no
A.4		Policy document is harmonized (with other United Nations standards)	Yes/no
B.1	Governance	Availability of designated programme manager for the organizational resilience management system	Yes/no
B.2		Coordination structure for crisis management established	Yes/no
B.3		Senior-level chair of the crisis management structure	Yes/no
B.4		Clarity of roles and responsibilities	Yes/no
B.5		Inclusion of all relevant United Nations entities in the crisis management coordination structure	Yes/no
B.5		Minimum of 2 meetings per year of the crisis management structure	Yes/no
C.1	Maintenance, exercise and review	Availability of training programmes for the organizational resilience management system	Yes/no
C.2		Availability to staff of organizational resilience management system awareness-raising materials	Yes/no
C.3		Frequency of training conducted	Number of times per year
C.4		Maintenance, exercise and review programme implemented	Yes/no
C.5		Percentage of members of the crisis management structures who have participated in an organizational resilience management system training programme	Percentage
D.1	Risk management	Availability of documented risk assessment, such as a security risk assessment	Yes/no
D.2		Risk assessment is updated annually	Yes/no
D.3		Risk assessment includes security risks, medical risks, information technology disaster recovery risks and business continuity risks	Yes/no
D.4		Risks are identified, assessed, treated and managed	Yes/no

No.	*Component*	*Indicator*	*Measurement*
E.1	Planning	Security plan	Yes/no/approved
E.2		Crisis management plan	Yes/no/approved
E.3		Business continuity plan	Yes/no/approved
E.4		Information technology disaster recovery plan	Yes/no/approved
E.5		Crisis communications plan	Yes/no/approved
E.6		Mass casualty incident response plan	Yes/no/approved
E.7		Staff support plan	Yes/no/approved
E.8		The above plans are harmonized	Yes/no
E.9		Frequency of plan reviews and updates	More than/fewer than 1 per year